

Message Text

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ORIGIN PM-05

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R 081546Z JUN 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
INFO AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN
CINCLANT NORFOLK VA
CINCPAC HONOLULU HAWAII 0000
CINPACFLT MAKALAPA HI
CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON
COMIDEASTFOR

S E C R E T STATE 145299

MILITARY ADDRESS ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, XO

SUBJECT: GELB-RENOUF MEETING ON INDIAN OCEAN ISSUES

1. SUMMARY: AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR RENOUF MET JUNE 6 WITH
LESLIE GELB, DIRECTOR OF POLITICO-MILITARY AFFAIRS TO DIS-
CUSS SEVERAL INDIAN OCEAN-RELATED ISSUES. SUBJECTS COVERED
WERE: PREVIEW OF ANZUS COUNCIL MEETING; REVIEW OF VICE-
PRESIDENT MONDALE'S TRIP TO CANBERRA, INCLUDING US POLICY
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ON INDIAN OCEAN EXERCISES; US COMMENTS ON RECENT SOVIET-
AUSTRALIAN DISCUSSIONS ON THE INDIAN OCEAN; AND US POSITION
OF RESUMING INDIAN OCEAN TALKS. END SUMMARY.

2. GELB INDICATED THAT US ANTICIPATED USEFUL ANZUS COUNCIL
DISCUSSIONS, BUT DID NOT INTEND TO RAISE ANY NEW ISSUES.
RENOUF SAID AUSTRALIA ALSO DID NOT INTEND TO RAISE NEW

ISSUES. GELB INDICATED US DESIRE FOR POSITIVE REFERENCE TO US-SOVIET INDIAN OCEAN ARMS LIMITATIONS TALKS IN AGREED ANZUS COMMUNIQUE. RENOUF WAS UNINSTRUCTED ON THAT POINT. (FYI: IN SUBSEQUENT TELEPHONE CONVERSATION, RENOUF AGREED, WITH ONE MODIFICATION, TO SUGGESTED US LANGUAGE FOR COMMUNIQUE.)

3. GELB INDICATED US SATISFACTION THAT THE VICE-PRESIDENT'S TRIP TO CANBERRA HAD GONE SMOOTHLY. IN VIEW OF CLOSE US-AUSTRALIAN CONSULTATIONS ON INDIAN OCEAN QUESTIONS THERE HAD NOT BEEN MAJOR DISCUSSION OF THIS ISSUE. REFERRING TO APRIL TALKS WITH AUSTRALIAN DELEGATION CONCERNING LAND-BASED STRIKE AIRCRAFT, GELB SAID THAT US HAD NOT YET COME TO ANY DECISION ON HOW TO RESOLVE THIS COMPLEX ISSUE. HOWEVER, AS A RESULT OF OUR DISCUSSIONS US FULLY UNDERSTOOD THAT THERE WOULD BE SERIOUS POLITICAL PROBLEMS FOR CANBERRA IF IN AN AGREEMENT THERE WERE SPECIAL LIMITATIONS APPLIED TO MILITARY DEPLOYMENTS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA. HE REAFFIRMED THAT US COMMITMENT TO AUSTRALIA HAVE PRIORITY OVER EFFORTS TO REACH AN INDIAN OCEAN AGREEMENT.

4. GELB SAID US HAD UNDERSTOOD THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR AUSTRALIA TO SCHEDULE A JOINT EXERCISE OFF WESTERN AUSTRALIA FOR LATER THIS YEAR. US HAD AGREED TO THIS AND HAD NO OBJECTION TO NEW ZEALAND ALSO PARTICIPATING.

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DURING HIS VISIT, VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE HAD AGREED TO CONDUCT MODERATE-LEVEL NAVAL AND AIR EXERCISE WITH AUSTRALIA. IN RESPONSE TO QUERY FROM RENOUF ON THE MEANING OF THE TERM MODERATE-LEVEL EXERCISE, GELB MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

- -- ACCORDING TO US VIEW OF AN INDIAN OCEAN AGREEMENT, EXERCISES AND DEPLOYMENTS SHOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH THE LEVEL AND PATTERN OF PREVIOUS DEPLOYMENTS; THERE SHOULD BE SOME "CAP" TO DEPLOYMENTS.
- -- FOR EXAMPLE, THE SCALE OF EXERCISE WHICH AUSTRALIA PROPOSED FOR THIS FALL CAN BE CARRIED OUT USING THE LEVEL OF US NAVAL FORCES ROUTINELY DEPLOYED TO THE INDIAN OCEAN; THE LEVEL OF LBSA IS CONSISTENT WITH THE LEVEL PREVIOUSLY DEPLOYED TO OTHER PARTS OF AUSTRALIA.
- -- HOWEVER, AN EXERCISE LIKE KANGAROO, WHICH INCLUDED AN AMPHIBIOUS TASK GROUP,

AND A LARGER CONCENTRATION OF NAVAL AND
AIR FORCES THAN IS ROUTINELY PRESENT
IN THE INDIAN OCEAN, WOULD NOT BE
CONSISTENT WITH AN AGREEMENT.

IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION FROM RENOUF, GELB STATED THAT
ABOVE IS INTER-AGENCY AGREED US POSITION ON EXERCISES.

5. (FYI: IN MAY AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR IN MOSCOW HAD
CONSULTATIONS WITH AMBASSADOR MENDELEVICH CONCERNING
INDIAN OCEAN TALKS. AUSTRALIA HAD SUBSEQUENTLY PASSED TO
DEPARTMENT A REPORT ON THE MEETING AND ASKED FOR USG
COMMENTS. END FYI.) COMMENTING ON SOVIET-AUSTRALIAN
TALKS, GELB NOTED THAT MANY OF THE POINTS RAISED BY
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MENDELEVICH HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN RAISED WITH US AND WE
HAD ALSO INFORMED AUSTRALIA.

- -- HE CRITICIZED SOVIET ATTEMPT TO CLAIM THAT
SCHEDULED ANZUS EXERCISE OFF WESTERN AUSTRALIA
MEANT THAT SCOPE OF ANZUS WAS BEING EXTENDED
TO INDIAN OCEAN. US THOUGHT THIS WAS A
FALSE ISSUE SINCE ANZUS COMMITMENTS HAVE
ALWAYS APPLIED TO BOTH PACIFIC AND INDIAN
OCEAN AREAS. US WOULD MAKE THIS POINT
CLEAR TO THE SOVIETS.

- -- SOVIETS CONTINUED TO PRESS FOR THEIR
DEFINITION OF THE INDIAN OCEAN AND CITED
US AND AUSTRALIAN REFERENCES TO SUPPORT
THIS. US AGREED WITH AUSTRALIA THAT THIS
IS A POLITICAL, NOT A CARTOGRAPHIC ISSUE.

- -- SOVIETS HAD PRESSED FOR AUSTRALIAN STATEMENT
ON WHETHER OR NO, US STRATEGIC FORCES WERE
DEPLOYED FROM COCKBURN SOUND. US HAS
PREVIOUSLY TOLD SOVIETS THAT THIS IS AN
AUSTRALIAN FACILITY. US THINKS IT WOULD
BE HELPFUL IF AUSTRALIA WERE ALSO TO MAKE
THIS POINT CLEAR TO SOVIETS.

6. REGARDING RESUMPTION OF TALKS, US HAS TOLD SOVIETS
THAT WE COULD NOT CONSIDER RESUMING THE TALKS WHILE
INCREASED LEVEL OF SOVIET NAVAL FORCES CONTINUES. US
HAS NOTED THAT SOVIET FORCE LEVELS HAVE RECENTLY DECREASED
SOMEWHAT, BUT ARE STILL NOT DOWN TO PREVIOUS LEVELS. WE
HAVE ALSO TOLD SOVIETS THAT WE WOULD FIND IT EXTREMELY
DIFFICULT TO CONCLUDE AN INDIAN OCEAN AGREEMENT AND
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GAIN CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT WHILE SOVIET POLITICAL AND
MILITARY ACTIVITIES IN THE REGION REMAIN UNRESTRAINED. VANCE

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